

What to Know About Invasive Species

- Invasive species are plants, animals and pathogens that disrupt our natural environment and cause harm to our health and economy. They frequently reproduce prolifically, grow and spread rapidly, and tolerate a wide variety of habitats. Our native plants and animals often can't compete!
- Invasive species are mostly non-natives, introduced by humans, either intentionally or accidentally.
- Invasive species alter our natural resources and impact the industries that rely on them in many ways. Nationwide, this translates into billions of dollars annually.
 - Aquatic invasives devastate commercial and recreational fishing industries. *Ex.: Eurasian water milfoil clogs boat motors and destroys fish habitat, while sea lamprey can kill the fish that they parasitize.*
 - Great Lakes utilities (and their customers) pay high dollars each year to control zebra mussels, which firmly attach to water intake pipes and clog them.
 - Forest invasives have long-term consequences on the forestry industry. *Ex.: Gypsy moths defoliate trees, both garlic mustard and buckthorn prevent tree regeneration, and buckthorn interferes with forest operations.*
 - Invasive species hurt our wildlife either directly or by modifying important habitat. *Ex.: Purple loosestrife forms dense monocultures in wetlands replacing almost all native vegetation, eliminating food and habitat for many species of wildlife.*
- The least costly solution is to prevent the introduction of invasive species, followed the by rapid detection and eradication of new invasions.
- There are things each of us can do to stop the spread of invasive species.
 - To protect our waters, INSPECT and REMOVE aquatic plants, animals, and mud from your boat, trailer and equipment. DRAIN all water from your boat's livewell, bilge, motor, bait buckets and transom wells. DRY your boat and equipment for five days before transferring to new waters, OR SPRAY/RINSE boat and equipment with high-pressure or hot water. DISPOSE OF UNUSED BAIT into the trash, not on the ground or in the water.
 - To preserve our forests, buy all firewood locally and don't transport firewood to other locations. When camping, don't leave any firewood unburned.
 - To preserve our natural places, clean your shoe and tire treads of mud that may have seeds from invasive plants.
 - Many invasive plants are still sold at nurseries or may be offered to you by a friend or neighbor. Learn which plants are invasive and eliminate them from your garden.
 - Work with volunteer groups to eliminate invasive species from your local natural places.